

THE PENDULUM

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BLACK HISTORY MONTH

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ILLUSTRATION BY MEGAN WALSH AND SARAH T. MOORE

The cover of the 2026 Black History Month special edition of The Pendulum was inspired by the Center for Race, Ethnicity and Diversity Education's monthlong theme of "History in the making: honoring our roots, routes, and resistance."

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CORRECTIONS

There are no corrections from the last edition of The Pendulum.

Students reflect on Black History Month



Alivia Johnson

SOPHOMORE PSYCHOLOGY MAJOR

What does Black History Month mean to you?

"For me, Black History Month means recognizing the achievements, accomplishments, culture and history of Black people."

Who is a Black figure that inspires you?

"A Black figure that is important for us to recognize is Ruby Bridges. Ruby is a civil rights activist and has always advocated for equality. Her story is an important one to recognize because she was the first Black child to attend a previously racially segregated school."



Jordyne Lewis

SOPHOMORE ECONOMIC CONSULTING & DATA ANALYTICS MAJOR

What does Black History Month mean to you?

"To me, Black history means celebrating the culture and the history that Black people have had in America over the years and just celebrating the struggles, the successes, celebrating the good, the bad, the ugly and really just thinking about the contributions that Black people have had to society and the beautiful things that we brought — like culture, different food, music, style and art. I think it's a time to really reflect and look back on where we've come from as well as how far we need to move forward and continue working."

Who is a Black figure that inspires you?

"A Black figure that inspires me is my mother. My mother is one of the most hardworking people that I know. She's so kind, she's sincere, she sticks to her morals and her values, and I really admire that. She pushes me to be a better person every single day and shows me what it means to be a true Black woman."



Hallel Capelle

FRESHMAN BIOLOGY MAJOR

What does Black History Month mean to you?

"Black History Month proves that people like me built, resisted, led, and created, even when the system stacked against them. If they can endure and rise, then I can do that too. I owe it to myself and them to move with discipline, purpose, and pride every single day. Go Black history."

Who is a Black figure that inspires you?

"My mom, because she is everything to me."



Tristan Lee

SOPHOMORE STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS MAJOR

What does Black History Month mean to you?

"Black History Month says a lot of importance about the kind of come up of America and the Black history that the country was built upon and a lot of the impacts that the Black community has had on not only just regular culture, but American culture."

Who is a Black figure that inspires you?

"Barack Obama and just how he carries himself. First Black president and that's very obviously important historically. He has a very culturally important presence."



Lauren McCowan

SOPHOMORE JOURNALISM & STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS MAJOR

What does Black History Month mean to you?

"If I could put a word on it, it would be 'reflection,' but if I were to put it in a phrase, it'd be a 'time of reflection and celebration.'"

Who is a Black figure that inspires you?

"Kerry Washington. She plays Olivia Pope in 'Scandal' and her role in 'Scandal' is very powerful. She stood as inspiration for a lot of Gen Z and millennial Black females who aspire to work in the government or public affairs. And because that is what I want to do in the future, she right now is inspiring me."



Rheanna Scott

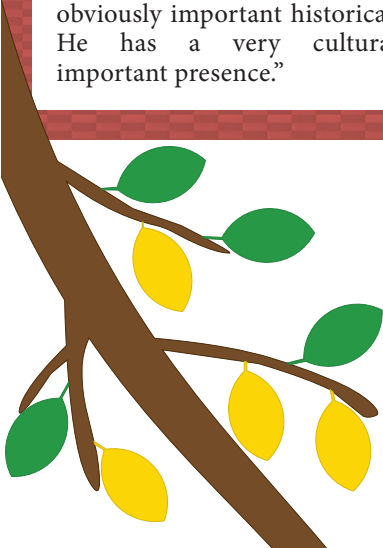
SOPHOMORE HUMAN SERVICE STUDIES MAJOR

What does Black History Month mean to you?

"Black History Month is a time where Black people in America get to be recognized, even those that have passed our time and all the good work that they have done for us. It's also the celebration of everyone that does something that pertains to the Black community. So it's not just Black people, but anyone who contributes to the community as a whole in a positive way."

Who is a Black figure that inspires you?

"A Black figure that has inspired me a lot is my granddad because he is self made. He has been working for himself since he was a teenager and he just embodies what a real Black man and a Black person should be like. He provides for his whole family by farming and I think that's very enlightening because it shows how independent and successful you can be without having to be under everybody else."



Courses on Black history broaden students’ perspectives

Civil Rights, African Gods classes address stereotypes, misconceptions on culture

Abigail Hines
Elon News Network

In just three weeks in January, Elon professor of sociology Raj Ghoshal takes his students through 500 years of history, focusing on the Black freedom struggle. Ghoshal said his course, SOC 3300: The Long Civil Rights Movement, helps students recognize the longevity of the fight for civil rights.

“The idea is that the Civil Rights Movement, or the quote, unquote, ‘short’ civil rights movement of 1954 to 1968, is certainly important, but it’s only one phase of this much bigger struggle that is not just for civil rights, but also for equality, justice, freedom,” Ghoshal said.

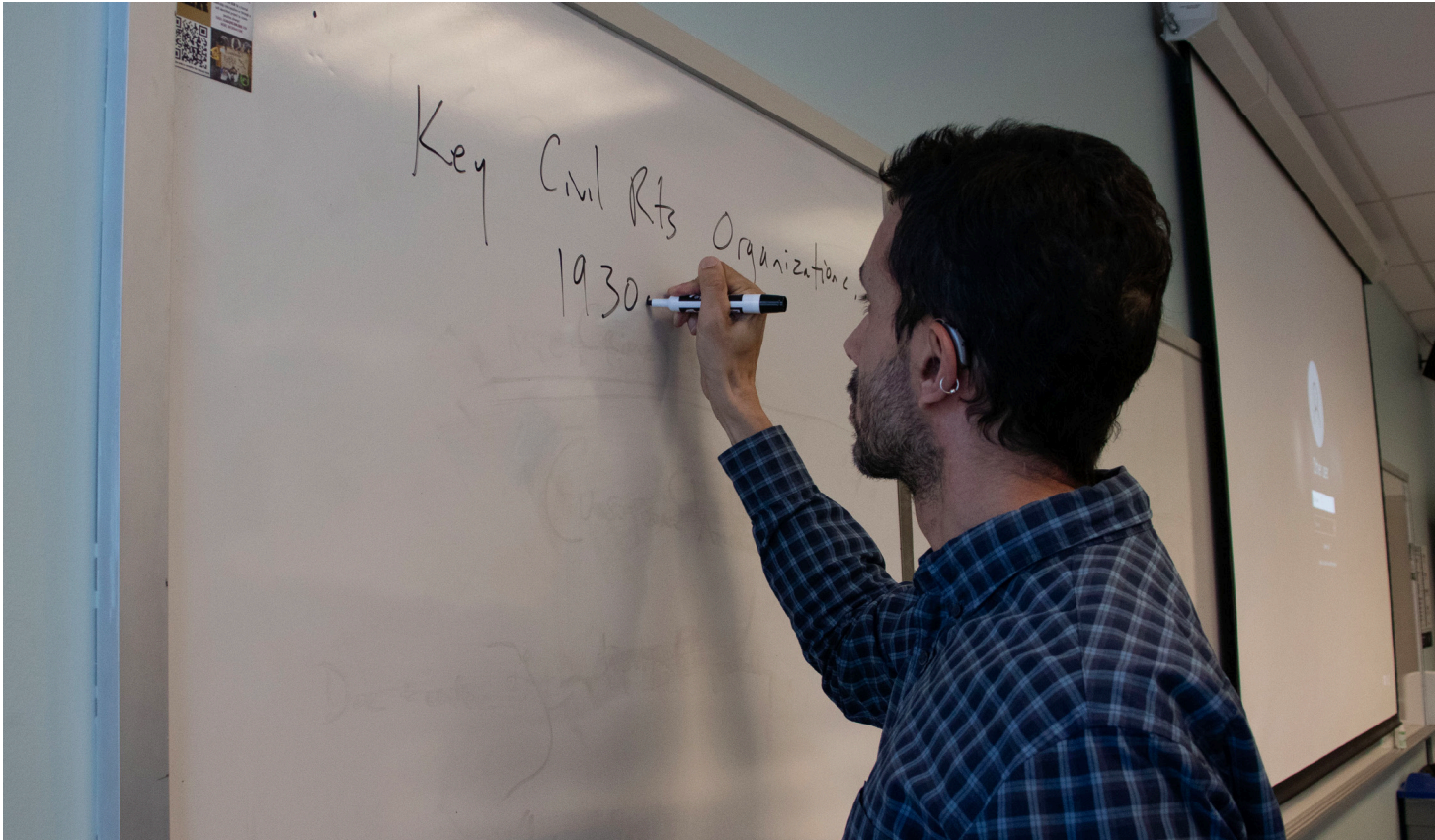
The class begins with studying the 1400s, when the transatlantic slave trade began. By the second week, they reach the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 60s that students are more familiar with. Ghoshal said many students could name activists like Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X, but were unaware of any other key figures from the movement.

“King was certainly very important, but he did not create the movement,” Ghoshal said.

The movement was the work of thousands of people, Ghoshal said.

Ghoshal said he educates his students on activists and leaders such as Ella Baker, who made significant impacts on North Carolina. Baker grew up in Raleigh and spent her career working for the NAACP. After hearing of student sit-ins at a lunch counter in Greensboro, she returned to her alma mater, Shaw University, to start the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

“I don’t aim to take anything away from King, but I do try to highlight the point that hundreds or thousands of other people did



ABIGAIL HINES | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Photo illustration of Raj Ghoshal who teaches a Winter Term course focused on the Civil Rights Movement and key activists throughout history.

many, many things that played important parts as well,” Ghoshal said.

For other students during the Winter Term, their class helped them see connections between cultures around the world.

Freshman Ágatha Nascimento enrolled in REL 1410: African Gods over Winter Term, not expecting to discuss relations to other religions outside of Africa. Nascimento found herself talking about traditions from her childhood in Brazil and how they were influenced by African religions.

“In Brazil, we have different nighttime kids’ stories that we tell and different songs that we sing to the kids at night, and I never really stopped to pay attention to what those

stories really were about until I was in that class,” Nascimento said.

Ghoshal, too, said he has seen his students make interdisciplinary connections between the course material and events they see in the news. While he refrained from inserting his own opinion into the conversation, Ghoshal said he encouraged his students to think critically about what they see today and the content from their course that can be applied to those issues.

Ghoshal said he hopes the lesson they take from this class is that political activism can be a long road, but progress builds over time from each person’s effort.

“I hope that there’s a lesson there in that class that political work, or the organizing work, or the strategizing work that happens

even in troubled political times, doesn’t go away,” Ghoshal said.

Ghoshal said the work of individuals from the 1890s to the 1930s laid the groundwork for people to use those organizations they built.

Nascimento said her course challenged prejudices and stereotypes of African cultures, and courses like hers give a stage for inclusivity.

“Introducing these sort of courses into Elon will create a space for everybody to know more about history and to be inclusive so that when we go out into our workspaces, we go into them with open-mindedness against all these stereotypes we see revolving around Black history,” Nascimento said.

Black History Month events on campus

February 11

Black Table Talk X Kickoff

5:30 p.m. - 7 p.m. | McBride Gathering Space

Join the Center for Race, Ethnicity and Diversity Education for food, Elon student performances, and engage with cultural exhibits.

February 13

Tiny Shelf Concert

5:30 p.m. - 7 p.m. | Belk Library

Belk Library lobby will turn into a stage for a concert in collaboration with the CREDE and will feature the rich cultural contributions of Black artists, including performances from the Melanated Melodies, Limitless and the Elon Gospel Choir.

February 17

African American Literature Read-in

6 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. | Belk Library 113

Read aloud or listen to people share their favorite works by African American writers.

February 21

Black History Month Basketball Game

7 p.m. | Schar Center

Cheer on the Phoenix as they face off against Delaware. Join the Black Student Union for a tailgate during the game.

February 25

Carnaval Celebration

5:30 p.m. - 7 p.m. | McKinnon Hall

Attend a multicultural celebration, blending African, Indigenous, Latinx, and other cultural traditions and performances.

February 27

Black Solidarity Conference

Noon - 5:30 p.m. | McKinnon Hall

Conference features various sessions designed to foster a deeper comprehension and reflection on individual cultural and societal insights, influences, and ongoing development.

February 28

Africa Night

6 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. | Alumni Gym

An event themed around “One Continent, Many Stories” with music, dance, food, Feand performances. The event offers to share tradition and honor the beauty and unity of African heritage.



Mother, daughter continue family legacy in Delta Sigma Theta, Inc.



Cameko Proctor and Elon senior Maleah Proctor at the Charlotte Debutante Ball in May 2025.

Elon senior Maleah Proctor follows her mother into Delta Sigma Theta, continuing passion for service

Anjolina Fantaroni
Elon News Network

Cameko Proctor did not always know whether her daughter, Elon University senior Maleah Proctor, would join Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated.

“When she began to be her own lady, her own person, out here in this world, going to college, I wasn’t for sure,” Cameko said.

For both women, Maleah’s membership was more than crossing into a Divine Nine organization. It was a family legacy, passed down through generations.

“I think she chose the right direction,” Cameko said.

According to the Elon University Fraternities and Sororities website Terminology page, “crossed” refers to the date of initiation into a cultural Greek organization and “legacy” is a potential member whose grandparent, parent, brother or sister is a member of a fraternity or sorority.

The Divine Nine, formally known as the National Pan-Hellenic Council Inc., is composed of nine International Greek letter Sororities and Fraternities, according to Elon’s NPHC page.

Maleah is her mother’s legacy in Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. Cameko said it warms her heart to see her legacy continue through Maleah.

“It makes me so proud of her,” Cameko said. “She has this leadership quality, but I think was very, very out front and to see her work her magic out in the open in representing my sorority, there’s nothing like it.”

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, was founded on Jan. 13, 1913, by 22 women at Howard University who promoted academic excellence and assisted those in need, according to their national website. The organization is committed to sisterhood, scholarship, service and addressing social issues.

Maleah said being a member of Delta Sigma Theta means being able to have a platform to advocate for social issues.

“We talk about different initiatives,

and how we can use our sorority and our platform to bring attention to different issues and kind of join in on different social action initiatives,” Maleah said.

For Maleah, joining Delta Sigma Theta is a connection to a history of great women, such as her mother and Mary Carroll Robertson — Elon’s first Black Homecoming Queen.

“There’s a really rich history at Elon, and it’s just one of those things that just makes you super proud to be a part of something bigger than yourself,” Maleah said.

Cameko crossed into the Union County Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta, a graduate chapter serving Union County, North Carolina. She said the organization’s commitment to service is what drew her in.

“I always out in the community, and nine out of 10, when I met these women, or I went to go speak with these women, they always were Deltas,” Cameko said. “I was like, ‘Wow, these are women that’s making an impact. And I want to be just like those women, like, I want to go out there and serve my community,’ so when I had a chance, that’s what I did.”

“

“WE ARE TRIED AND TRUE SISTERS. IN THE END, MY DAUGHTER IS NOT ONLY MY DAUGHTER, BUT SHE’S A SISTER TO ME.”

CAMEKO PROCTOR
MEMBER OF UCAC DELTA SIGMA THETA

According to Cameko, being a member of is a lifetime commitment of sisterhood, one she now shares with her daughter.

“We are true, tried and true sisters,” Cameko said. “In the end, my daughter is not only my daughter, but she’s a sister to me.”

Maleah, the current president of Elon’s Black Student Union, said several influential women on campus shaped journey, including former BSU president Aleezah Adams, a member of Delta Sigma

Theta.

“I kept coming across influential women, and saw what they were doing, and then when common denominator for all of them were that they all happen to be Deltas,” Maleah said.

Before joining, Maleah said was already familiar with the sorority through her mother and aunties. Maleah’s aunties are Cameko’s line sisters — not sisters by blood, but sisters by commitment and oath.

“I kept coming across influential women doing great things here, and so that really kind of drove me to be inspired and want to be a part of the same type of thing that they were,” Maleah said.

On March 3, 1913, two months after its founding, the sorority participated in its first public act of service by marching in the Woman Suffrage Procession in Washington, D.C.

Maleah, a Political Science and Policy Studies double major, said the organization has a rich history of giving back to the community by participating in social action.

“Social action and the political state of the world is something that’s always interested me too, and has impacted my future career path,” Maleah said. “To have that history is really important. One of the reasons why I also wanted to be a part of this organization, because so much of this foundation is made up of service and giving back to community.”

For Maleah, being a legacy means a continuation of greatness and representation — especially on Elon’s campus, which is a predominantly white institution. Maleah said representation shows others, who may not look like her, what she is capable of.

“That’s one of the reasons why I think it’s so important that I show up in so many different ways on campus, because I want to continue that legacy, not only for my mom, not only for my sorority, but for myself and other people who look like me,” Maleah said.

For Cameko, legacy is a continuation. “When I add my legacy and add her great mind and her thoughts and what she contributes to this earth, when she has a long list of things that she does right now that adds more and more organization, it makes it greater,” Cameko said. “It makes it better. It makes it diverse.”



ANJOLINA FANTARONI | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Elon senior Maleah Proctor makes a bracelet at Sweet Solidarity hosted by the CREDE on Feb. 4.



ANJOLINA FANTARONI | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Elon senior Maleah Proctor’s Delta Sigma Theta pullover with “Legacy” in red letters Feb. 4.



COURTESY OF MALEAH PROCTOR
Cameko Proctor and Elon senior Maleah Proctor at the Delta Sigma Theta Founder’s Day Celebration in Charlotte on Jan. 11.



COURTESY OF MALEAH PROCTOR
Elon senior Maleah Proctor and her mother, Cameko Proctor, at Maleah’s cheerleading senior night Nov. 2025.



Student musicians share their passions across campus, beyond



Breaking boundaries, sharing identities drive their music

Megan Walsh
Elon News Network

For Elon students, Nailah Ware and Xie Atkinson, a love for music began during childhood. Now, both share their music, passion and lived experiences on and off campus.

The two artists seek opportunities on and off campus, including in the music production and recording arts department, in on-campus clubs such as Limitless and Limelight Records, performing in off-campus shows and releasing music to streaming platforms.

Student rapper rhyming resilience

Ware, a senior music production and recording arts major, said she got into music and composing at an early age after hearing music on the radio.

“I was always just fascinated by it, because it always made me happy,” Ware said. “It was something I could rely on; stability in my life. So that’s how I got into it young. I started playing saxophone, alto saxophone. I composed my first piece at age seven.”

Specializing in hip hop and rap music, Ware said she likes to highlight themes of love, resilience, mental health and self-doubt in her music. She said making her music represent her truth and vulnerability is important, given the current reputation of rap being associated with violence.

“How can I make it into hip hop and not look like a sellout or like a wannabe hood person?” Ware said. “Because I’m not, and that’s where my background was actually my light in it, because I’m a differentiator. I’m the person who’s educated but swagged out.”

In addition to performances through



Then-junior Nailah Ware manages the beats of fellow artists during the Limitless pop-up show Nov. 11, 2024, as N Major at Medallion Plaza.

her major, Ware is a co-founder of Limitless, a club that offers performance opportunities for R&B and hip hop artists. Ware has also released music onto major streaming platforms under the stage name N Major, including a recent album titled J Major.

As a freshman, Ware met assistant professor of marketing George Talbert, who ultimately became a mentor for her in how to market herself and her music.

Talbert said Ware excels at sales and has done well in sales competitions with the Elon Sales Team. He also said that Ware is a true professional and tries hard to market herself and her music as professionally as possible.

“You wouldn’t know that she was a college student,” Talbert said. “You would have thought that she was out there selling millions of records already. So what she’s done is she’s taken the 4 p’s of marketing; product, price, place and promotion, that’s the science of marketing, and she’s

integrated those things into her music.”

Ware said in today’s era, there are no black political leaders, and celebrities are filling the role of continuing to pursue racial equality. She said this shift and how influential music can be is what has encouraged her to discuss the topics she does in her music.

“What else can we talk about?” Ware said. “Done with this murder, done with this macho. Let’s talk about crying. Let’s talk about love. Let’s talk about how can we get through the day? Let’s talk about getting educated. Something different, yeah, something more optimistic.”

Sophomore performs from the heart

Sophomore Xie Atkinson, a music production and recording arts and psychology double major, grew up surrounded by a family that played music, and they said they knew pursuing music was the path for them after performing in

their first talent show.

“People would tell me, ‘Oh, you have a beautiful voice.’ But I was like, ‘No, that doesn’t happen.’” Atkinson said. “After my first talent show, I was like, this is something that I really could do maybe, and I really love it, and it’s really fun, and performing for people fills me with so much joy. Why not make it something that I do always?”

Atkinson said they like to explore all styles of music and never want to stick to a specific genre for their work.

“Every time I release something, or release a full project or something like that, I want it to be known as an amalgamation of different genres together,” Atkinson said. “Because being put into a box is something I reject every day, and so I want my music to reflect that as well.”

Outside their major, Atkinson is a part of Elon a cappella group Twisted Measure, an artist for the Limelight Records club, Elon Music Ambassadors and audition-based groups Camerata and élan.

Atkinson said they pull from their intersecting identities for much of the inspiration for their music, especially the oppression they and their family have faced over race.

“They influence me in such a way that it makes the music and it makes the journey even more powerful,” Atkinson said. “And it makes it a lot easier to hear myself through when I think, if my mom got through this, and my grandmother got through this, and they’ve experienced the same things, especially with being black in America in our current time, in our current day, and even before then, I know I can.”

Ware and Atkinson’s music can both be found on most major streaming platforms, including Spotify and Apple Music. Additionally, both will perform in the Black History Month Tiny Shelf Concert at 5:30 p.m. Feb. 13 in Belk Library.

Local Black-owned businesses promote relationships, fill needs in community

Two Gibsonville businesses draw in customers with a personal touch

Abby Gravely
Elon News Network

When clients visit Crown Slayer Salon in downtown Gibsonville, they go for more than just the hairstyles. Owner and stylist Bonita Garner works to provide everyone who sits down in her chair an outlet to rant, ask for advice or just connect.

“Often stylists are so much more than just stylists,” Garner said. “We become counselors in a way.”

That practice of going above and beyond was successful, with Garner opening a second location just three years after the first. Garner said Crown Slayer Salon fills a need in the area — somewhere for the Black community to embrace their natural hair and learn to style it effectively.

“It’s important because we haven’t always had a history of loving our hair,” Garner said. “We have had to learn to love ourselves, from our crown to our skin to who we are.”

She evaluates hair texture and conditions to advise clients on the best steps forward, and said she feels that healthy and beautiful hair has the ability to unlock new levels of confidence, calling it an “alternate ego situation.”

“When they get to the end and I’m turning them around in my chair and looking in the mirror letting them see their hair, this whole other person comes out,” Garner said.

Just 200 yards away, another Black-

owned business is filling a hole in the community. Alexis Hefney’s Ava’s Cuisine and Catering serves up soul food that she said feels like home cooking.

“It’s pretty much what raised me, what makes me who I am today,” said Hefney about the food she serves.

What started as a food truck to supplement Hefney’s high school teacher’s salary has grown to two locations and an event catering department. The flagship Greensboro take-out spot opened in 2023, and a dine-in location in Gibsonville in early 2025. Originally purchased as a catering kitchen, Hefney took one look at the Gibsonville property and decided it had potential and needed to serve customers.

Hefney’s business was named after her 8-year-old daughter Ava, which provides extra motivation to succeed.

“It puts a little bit more umph in my step each time I step into the doors because I know there’s a meaning behind it,” Hefney said. They live by the mission statement of “fresh, innovative, personal,” and live to embody those traits every day.

Both Hefney and Garner attribute their success to the teams of people who work alongside them. Garner’s second location is dedicated to those stylists who provide services she herself can’t, so that anyone who comes through her doors can be serviced.

“We work together as a team to service the community,” Garner said.

While Hefney hops around locations and steps in when needed, she said she always tries to make time to connect with customers and employees.

“We are completely about community,” Hefney said, “We’re just one big family.”



Bonita Garner catches up with a client while braiding her hair at downtown Gibsonville’s Crown Slayer Salon.



Ava’s Cuisine & Catering opened its dine-in Gibsonville location in early 2025.

Memory of Alamance County lynching victims lingers as local coalition educates community

Alamance County Community Remembrance Coalition keeps county history alive

Miles Hayford
Elon News Network

Alamance County Community Remembrance Coalition member Loy Campbell said that it will be impossible to recover from the Jim Crow era of racial injustice if it's not talked about. Campbell said understanding how we got here is essential for finding a way to live in a society that is free from racial terror.

"It's not an effort to punish America or make people feel bad, but it's an effort to think about what we have done, and how can we move forward towards a place of true justice," Campbell said.

After almost 7 years of bringing stories of Alamance County's past to light, the coalition has helped educate the community about three racial lynchings in the county's past. Campbell said that the goal is to educate others about the lynchings of Wyatt Outlaw, William Puryear and John Jeffries. The coalition has many projects aimed at educating the community about the lynchings. One example is their soil collection project, where they collected soil from the site, or as close as they could get, of each lynching. The soil is preserved in the African-American Cultural Arts and History Center in Burlington.

Along with an annual vigil for Outlaw, the coalition is also beginning to work on a historical marker placement project, which would put up a marker for each lynching victim. Campbell said they will begin with the marker for Jeffries. Campbell also said that in the future, they want to claim a copy of Jeffries's monument in the Equal Justice Initiative's memorial in Alabama. Campbell said they want to bring a copy back to place in Alamance County.

"The same threads of racism and white supremacy and violence and terror have been common throughout and they continue today," Campbell said. "I think really understanding that narrative was a big part of why I thought it was important that we bring this history to life in Alamance County."

Campbell said that seeing the museum was very powerful, especially with the current administration. Seeing humans being cruel to one another is something that Campbell said is disheartening.

"This past trip that I went on two weeks ago felt rebellious because right now we have a federal government that's trying to hide history and erase what has happened, and that's not gonna get us anywhere good," Campbell said.

Wyatt Outlaw

Of the three documented lynchings in Alamance County, Outlaw's death was the first to occur, and likely the most well-known, Campbell said. Outlaw was an important figure in the local community as he was the first African American to serve as Graham's constable and town commissioner. Outlaw grew up enslaved but had significant freedom due to his white father, who was good friends with Outlaw's slave owner, according to Carole Troxler, an 18th century historian who has worked with the coalition.

Outlaw was a representative at the Freedmen's Convention in 1866 and became a significant figure in Alamance County's history, organizing the Union League in the county. Troxler said that Outlaw met and allied with Republican governor William Woods Holden, who encouraged him to organize the league. In Graham, he owned a cabinet shop, which also served as a meeting place for the Union League and other Republican Party contacts. The Ku Klux Klan killed him for encouraging newly enfranchised black men to vote Republican, Troxler said. Outlaw was dragged out of his home during the night and was hanged



MILES HAYFORD | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Soil collected from the lynching sites of Wyatt Outlaw and William Puryear by the Alamance County Remembrance Coalition at the African-American Cultural Arts & History Center in Burlington on Jan. 30.

from a tree near the courthouse in Graham.

Outlaw's great-great-grandson, Samuel Merritt, said that he has learned more about Outlaw in the last five years than ever before. He said Outlaw was someone who embraced the well-being of people.

"He could have been a bandit. He could have been someone that murdered 15 people. But on the other side, he was not that," Merritt said. "He was someone that stood for good, for goodness sake, he tried to do good. He tried to do a good job. He wasn't a hater of people."

Merritt said he is grateful to see that Outlaw's spirit lingers in the community.

"That spirit is still alive within the community, and people have recognized him, his works, his deeds, and the events that happened during his lifetime," Merritt said. "I'm wowed by that because, like I said, this didn't happen when my mother or

grandmother were still living."

William Puryear

The next lynching in Alamance County was the killing of Puryear, a black man who was speaking out against the lynching of Outlaw. Shortly after Outlaw's death, Puryear recognized one of the men who had captured Outlaw and reported this information to a Graham magistrate, according to Troxler. Puryear was then taken from his home by a mob, and his body was found a few weeks later in a mill pond with a 20-pound stone tied to his foot.

John Jeffries

The last recorded lynching was of Jeffries, who was killed in 1920. Campbell said that Jeffries didn't actually live in Alamance County, but worked in the county. Jeffries, a resident of Granville

County, got off the train at Elon to go to work. Jeffries was accused of raping a young girl. A mob, which was led by Elon College President William Harper, carried out the lynching. Elon University describes Harper's role on their Anti-Black Racism From Elon's History project. According to the website, part of the goal is to "examine Elon's institutional history in a transparent, participatory and intellectually rigorous manner."

Campbell said that the coalition is looking to create a historical marker to honor Jeffries. With help from the EJI, they are hoping to have a ceremony within the next year or two, along with the marker.

The future of the coalition

Campbell said a big focus for the coalition is getting the word out and having more people attend their events. She said it's an uncomfortable topic for people to listen to and talk about.

"When you start talking about racial violence and lynching, people are very, very uncomfortable, especially white people. But also it's a very challenging thing to talk about with people of color," Campbell said. "This is their heritage and so everybody's a little bit uncomfortable. And so I think it can be hard to get people to come to an event or to learn more, because it's really hard, but it's important."

Merritt said it is vital for people to understand Alamance County and the nation's past to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past.

"You need to know where you went wrong in order to try to do right," Merritt said. "There were some misdeeds done at that point in our history, and we need to recognize those. Not everything is pretty, so we need to have the good and the bad as a part of the total picture."

Fiona McAllister contributed to the reporting of this story.



MILES HAYFORD | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

A book about the life of Wyatt Outlaw on display at the African American Cultural Arts & Center in Burlington on Jan. 30.

Elon alum details experiences of fatherhood in children’s book ‘We Love you ForAva!’



“We Love You ForAva!” is available in Carol Grotnes Belk Library. The book was co-written by Elon alum Jeffrey Williamson-Rose.

TRISTA PANAGAKOS | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Jeffrey and Corddarryl Williamson-Rose published their book last June, 2 years after adopting their daughter

Trista Panagakos
Elon News Network

For Jeffrey and Corddarryl Williamson-Rose, adoption was an option they were considering months before their wedding. They debated other ways to grow their family, but after getting married in September 2022, they began the adoption process.

The Williamson-Roses’ adoption journey began with a home study, a procedure where a social worker ensures the parents hoping to adopt are fit to care for and provide for a child.

After their home study was approved the couple utilized a marketing agency to create a profile book that explained who they were to expectant mothers. The agency sent their book to youth groups, prisons and smaller agencies to begin advertising the two. While this approach gets hopeful parents out there, their profiles are usually competing against multiple other profiles.

Jeffrey said they had two potential matches with expectant mothers before

meeting the birth mother of their daughter Ava in May 2023. Over the course of the next nine months, the Williamson-Roses’ attended doctor appointments and built a relationship with Ava’s birth mom. The two were originally in the delivery room before she was transferred to a different room where doctors performed a C-section.

“We’ve developed this amazing relationship with them, with her, with her mother, with her brother, and it has exceeded our family,” Jeffrey said. “We have spent Mother’s Day together. We spent Christmases together, Thanksgiving, half birthdays, Halloween.”

Jeffrey said he acknowledges how the adoption process for him and his husband may be completely different from that of other hopeful parents.

“There are people on their website that have been on there for three to four years,” Jeffrey said. “I remember going on their website and like seeing the same families that were on there after we got on, or even before we got on. So it’s been such a blessing that we were able to kind of match and go as quickly as we did.”

The idea for writing a book came to Jeffrey six months before Ava was born. He said he did not originally know what it was going to be about, but when Ava was born and their lives progressed, the book wrote itself.

“There are a lot of scenarios in the book that we actually lived in real life,” Jeffrey said. “So going on our first cruise together, our first plane ride, she FaceTimes, you know, all three of her grandmothers, you know, pretty much every day. So we just took real life situations and incorporated it.”

The children’s book features art created by the artificial intelligence image generator Midjourney. The couple uploaded reference photos and refined their prompt to ensure the images generated were accurate and in the illustration style they wanted.

“I was an art major when I went to Elon, so I battled going back and forth, ‘Do I want to kind of create these and use my own talents and stuff,’” Jeffrey said. “In the future I may do that. But, you know, where we are in the world I thought it was really cool to kind of test the limits of technology to see what we were able to create and exactly what we wanted.”

The book was released on Father’s Day in 2025, and Jeffrey said he and his husband used social media to post illustrations from the book to tease its release. He said the reaction on social media was positive. The two were also featured at an event on Elon’s campus in November.

The event was hosted by the Gender & LGBTQIA Center and the LGBTQIA Alumni Network. Jeffrey received his

undergraduate and graduate degrees from Elon. While the Williamson-Roses were planning the marketing of the book, they reached out to alumni resources on campus.

“I thought that it would be an excellent part to kind of take it back home,” Jeffrey said. “And you know who I am today was made through my four years, well, five years with grad school, it made everything possible, so I felt it was only right to do so.”

Assistant Director for Alumni Engagement La’Tonya Wiley said the planning for the event started in the summer but logistical planning took place during the fall semester. The event featured a conversation with the Williamson-Roses about the adoption process and their book.

“It was just to support an alumni author and also to bring awareness to the cause of same sex couple adoption, and to provide resources and information for those who may be interested or going through the same experience, and to celebrate the work again of our alumni,” Wiley said.

Jeffrey said the Belk Library staff provided adoption resources for attendees to interact with.

In the future, Jeffrey said he and his husband want to create other iterations of the book and bring it to Elon’s campus as well.

Leadership Fellows connect to history during annual trip to Alabama

Isabella Cannon Leadership Fellows reflect on Civil Rights history during Disarming Injustice course

Alice Morrissey
Elon News Network

Each year, the sophomore cohort for the Elon Isabella Cannon Leadership Fellows takes a trip to Alabama during the Winter Term, visiting places with deep American history and relevance, including landmarks of the Civil Rights movements such as the Edmund Pettus Bridge, the Equal Justice Initiative Legacy Museum and the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute.

The program is meant to help fulfill the common good initiative required by leadership fellows and Elon students pursuing a leadership experimental learning requirement, according to dean of Student Development and professor for the leadership fellows' Winter Term class Jodean Schmiederer.

"A common good initiative is a substantive change that is sustained even after the students leave," Schmiederer said. "It's not something that one person can do, right? It takes a group, it takes advocacy."

She said students on the trip are challenged to think beyond what they learned in their history books and build a connection with people and historical events.

For students like Elon junior Bella Hooke, who traveled to Alabama last January, the experiences are still making an impact on her life and how she defines herself as a leader. Hooke said that as a freshman, when she was first learning about the trip, the first thought she and many of her classmates had was, "Why Alabama?"

She said, without knowing what the trip entailed, she didn't understand how the leadership fellows' trip compared to other programs. However, reflecting on her time in the South a year later, Hooke said the impact it had on her was significant.

"We see everything completely differently now," Hooke said. "Especially with everything that's going on now, I think that this trip is even more vital to have. So we have a better understanding of how we progressed, how we also regressed in some ways."

Hooke said the trip inspired her to reflect on her own background and the impact the Civil Rights Movement has on her everyday life.

Hooke said she was adopted from Guatemala into a predominantly white family.

"Having all these opportunities to go to these great schools, get an education, get all of these leadership positions made me realize that that wouldn't have been possible if it weren't for a lot of these horrific events," Hooke said. "That wouldn't have been possible without these brave people that stood up against society and put their life on the line because, unlike the people around them, they were brave enough to say, 'no, this is not okay.'"

Hooke said one of the most impactful moments on the trip was visiting the Equal Justice Initiative Legacy Museum.

The museum showcases 400 years of African history throughout its exhibits, documenting events from the trans-Atlantic slave trade to modern disputes about justice and inequality.

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PEOPLE OUR AGE OR YOUNGER
PLANNED THESE HUGE
MOVEMENTS IN DORM ROOMS.

LUKE BONIFACIO
SOPHOMORE

For Luke Bonifacio, an Elon sophomore recently returning from the trip, an exhibit that stuck out for him during his visit to the museum documented the history of lynching, a phrase used to describe an illegal, informal public execution conducted by mobs, often intertwined with racial and cultural discrimination.

Bonifacio said he found a documented case of lynching in Alamance County from the 1920s, a story that hit close to home.

"We realized that the university was older than the latest lynching," Bonifacio said. "That really stuck out to all of us."

Bonifacio said learning about the sit-in lunch counter protests made him grateful to have gone on the trip as a college student, saying it was inspiring to learn about how young people were able to play large leadership roles during the Civil Rights Movement.

"People our age or younger planned these huge movements in dorm rooms," Bonifacio said. "I think the biggest takeaway that leadership fellows get from going on this trip, we do have voices and



COURTESY OF LUKE BONIFACIO

The class of 2028 Isabella Cannon Leadership Fellows pose for a group photo during their trip to Alabama.

power in what we say, so we should use it wisely."

Schmiederer said that every year she teaches the class, it's fun to see how the students engage and connect with the stories they are told. Although many aspects of the course can weigh heavily on students, she said that each cohort leans into learning how to make an impact and a change in the world by appreciating the movement.

The fellows program is named after and

endowed by Isabella Cannon. Graduating from Elon, Cannon held various impactful roles throughout her life, including being the first female mayor of Raleigh. During her commencement speech at Elon's class of 2000s graduation, she reminded students to "think globally and act locally."

"I think Isabella Cannon would be very proud of them," Schmiederer said.

Editor's note: Executive Director of Elon News Network Anjolina Fantaroni is a Leadership Fellow.

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Members of a construction crew place a steel beam covered in signatures atop the Paramount Theater at the theater's Topping Out celebration Feb. 5. Construction began in August 2025, and the project is expected to be completed in July 2026. ANJOLINA FANTARONI | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Elon University redshirt sophomore guard Ned Hull dribbles the ball during their match, while being guarded by Drexel University sophomore guard Dillon Tingler. The Phoenix lost the game, 82-77. ALEXANDER SIEGEL | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Lion Dancers perform in front of Elon University community members in the crowd at the Truitt Center for Religious and Spiritual Life's annual Lunar New Year Celebration in McBride Gathering Space on Feb 6. "One wonderful thing about this work is that students may never have celebrated the Lunar New Year before," Director of Multifaith Programming and Engagement at Elon Hillary Zaken said. "They've heard about it, they've read about it, but they've never had the chance to be a part of a celebration. So the more the merrier." ANJOLINA FANTARONI | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



Student reads posters at the "Honoring the Legacy of Imam W. D. Mohammed: Roots, Routes, and Resistance" program Feb. 4 in the McBride Gathering Space. Learn about upcoming Black History Month events on Page 3. VENUS SOTO CASTANEDA | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



6-year-old Ellie Hinson signs the steel beam at the Paramount Theater's Topping Out Ceremony on Feb. 5. ANJOLINA FANTARONI | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Elon ranks 9th for on-campus technological integration

University Magazine recognizes
Elon's practical application,
resources such as ElonGPT

Evan Cooper
Elon News Network

Elon University is ranked the ninth best high-tech college campus by University Magazine, a publication that reports about colleges and universities to inform current and prospective students. It is the highest ranking high-tech campus in the state of North Carolina, above Duke University at 12th.

According to University Magazine, the ranking was based on how technology on campuses interacts with students to improve learning. Elon was praised for its practical application of technology in the classroom, and across majors.

Christopher Waters, assistant vice president of Information Technology and Chief Information Officer, was unavailable for an interview but sent a statement to Elon News Network. He wrote that IT at Elon works to support Elon University's core values of engaged and experiential learning.

"At Elon, we are always researching and planning as we expand facilities and the existing technologies change that support our work, community and educational opportunities," Waters wrote. "Our goal is to maintain our existing infrastructure while always keeping an eye on the future."



EVAN COOPER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Downtown Maker Hub employees senior David Stacy and senior Owen Crider chat in the woodshop.

“

I REALLY THINK IT'S
IMPORTANT TO HAVE A SAFE
SPACE TO TRY THINGS, LEARN
HOW TO PROBLEM SOLVE AND
USER YOUR CREATIVE BRAIN.

ANNIKA BENANDER
MAKER HUB EMPLOYEE

An example of technology in the classrooms is the Innovation Quad — home to Elon's engineering program and department of physics. The IQ gives students access to engineering equipment and workshops, as well as biology labs and classrooms.

For students across all majors, The Maker Hub is open to students and faculty. The Maker Hub has 3D printers, laser engravers, sewing machines and more in its stations in the Colonnades Neighborhood and downtown Elon.

All students need to do to access the Maker Hub's resources on their own is to complete training courses on Moodle. After that, they are free to use the equipment they trained on. Junior Annika Benander, an employee at the Maker Hub in the Colonnades neighborhood, said it's a great place for educational, social and personal use.

"I really think it's important to have a safe space to try things, learn how to problem solve and use your creative brain," Benander said. "I think it's also great for sustainability, learning how to upcycle and not throwing away something just because it's broken."

The Maker Hub also works with classes to make learning more hands-on. Examples posted on the Maker Hub's website include business students turning their product prototypes into real objects, arts and humanities students making chainmail armor, and science students 3D printing a hand to show the tendons in the arm.

Junior Michael Fath has been working at the Maker Hub's downtown location for a little over a year. Though his political science major has little overlap with his work at the Maker Hub, he said he has still learned a lot from his work.



EVAN COOPER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Downtown Maker Hub employee junior Olivia Jordan takes a completed figure out of one of the Hub's 3D printers.

"If I want to make something I now have the skills and the knowledge of how to make that, but also I know what to look for when making something," Fath said. "If I want something to help organize my room, my first thought isn't 'I should go to Target,' it's 'I can spend 30 minutes or 45 minutes making a little thing for that.'"

The Maker Hub is funded by Elon University. Though its main audience are students, the Maker Hub has also collaborated with local organizations who need the tools the Maker Hub has. According to Benander, collaborations include 3D-printing soap molds for Benevolence Farms, and working with Tikkun Olam Makers to create toddler mobility trainers.

Elon University's artificial intelligence platform, ElonGPT, brought Elon University into the artificial intelligence sphere. The platform was launched in September 2024 as a way for students to connect to Elon alumni and ask questions. ElonGPT uses a database of Elon University resources, in order to give students answers that fit to their on-campus experience. Since launch, the platform has expanded to include its own chatbot and advising help.

Elon University works to maintain ethical AI use by following the six AI principles laid out by the United Nations Internet Governance Forum in October

2023. Mustafa Akben, director of artificial intelligence integration at Elon, said these principles help to make sure human ingenuity is at the center of Elon's work with AI.

“

MY TEAM AND I HAVE
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ACCEPTING IT UNCRITICALLY.

MUSTAFA AKBEN
ELON UNIVERSITY DIRECTOR OF ARTIFICIAL
INTELLIGENCE INTEGRATION

"We see that some people are very eager to adopt early, while others are cautious, and rightfully so," Akben said. "My team and I have provided support for each group, and we try to be critical about this technology rather than accepting it uncritically."

In development now, Akben is working on creating a version of ElonGPT that will

help act as an AI learning support system for students. Akben has not set deadlines for a widespread release, in order to properly understand the benefits and impacts of the AI before release. The AI will use resources provided by teachers for its database, and will provide answers based on proven teaching strategies to ensure students are able to enhance their learning.

Teachers will also be provided data on anonymous questions asked about their classes. Akben said this will help teachers know what to help their students with, furthering education on both sides.

"We utilize all the learning sites behind the scenes, and it is not like ChatGPT," Akben said. "When you say, 'Hey, can you write my essay,' it'll deny it. 'It will say, 'I'm not going to write your essay, but we can brainstorm and I can give you feedback.'"

The new ElonGPT system will function similarly to other chatbots, but with a deeper focus on education. Akben said the AI will base its responses on information provided by faculty members, opposed to ChatGPT which can access the whole internet. The AI will also use interaction history with the student specifically to identify areas that need improvement, and will suggest ways to improve their learning.

One of the major concerns with AI models is privacy, and where the information shared with these chatbots goes. Akben said Elon recognizes the importance of finding a trustworthy Large Language Model to base ElonGPT on, so students can trust their information is safe. Akben also said that, while this idea could be years away, he wants Elon University to develop their own LLM to operate ElonGPT on.

As technology continues to rapidly advance, Elon is working to keep up while keeping students and faculty as the focus. Waters wrote that through regular communication between IT, the Provost and the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the technological needs of students and faculty are kept at the forefront of change.

"Elon's core values include engaged and experiential learning," Waters wrote. "Our partnerships with faculty and programs of study allow students to get real experience using technology to support them after graduation. As AI continues to emerge in new ways, Information Technology is there as part of the backbone to connect systems, protect data and provide training for the community as we learn together."

Elon University’s SGA to implement suggestion boxes on campus, look to make an impact this semester



ENN FILE PHOTO

SGA passed legislation, hosted town hall, met with Queens University students

Trista Panagakos
Elon News Network

Elon University’s Student Government Association had an eventful fall semester following the implementation of a new funding model, freshman elections and an atypical town hall.

The funding model organizations use to request money from SGA was changed last spring to a quarterly system. This new system prioritized on-campus events and does not cover non-essential food and supplies. Many organizations had to adjust to having a more structured funding system, as well as one that placed larger limitations on what would be funded than in previous years.

Vice President of Communications for SGA Kennedy Steiner said SGA has held information sessions to educate club presidents on how to apply and receive funding. She also highlighted the efforts of Vice President of Finance Ian Brecker to meet with organizations individually to

explain the funding model.

“Change is change,” Steiner said. “People don’t always love change, but I think for the future, I think this could be really good, people asking, maybe why something didn’t get funded, and just making sure everything was as equitable as possible for organizations.”

SGA swore in new freshman senators Sept. 18. Steiner said right after being sworn in freshmen take part in the SGA retreat, which helps them become familiar with other senators and the proceedings of SGA. She said freshmen senators have already written legislation that has been passed. The legislation creates suggestion boxes students can use to be heard by SGA.

“It will be like just suggestion boxes, where we will be checking them so that we can make sure that they get to where they need to go, just trying to, again, get another way for the student body’s voice to be heard and voice their concerns,” Steiner said.

Besides legislation for suggestion boxes, SGA has also passed legislation recognizing pedestrian safety month and safe practices when traveling around campus.

Throughout the semester SGA interacted with senior faculty and staff,

with the fireside chat they hosted with President Connie Book and Vice President of Student Life Jon Dooley and the senior staff dinner. During these events, SGA is able to bring concerns and questions students have to staff.

SGA’s executive council was invited to a board of trustees meeting that also included the student government executive council from Queens University amid the merger with Queens.

“That was really great to hear from students from Queens to know what their student body was thinking, but from the conversation we had with them, they were really excited,” Steiner said.

SGA also hosted their fall town hall. Steiner said this event was different then previous years because of the emphasis on a conversation centered event and the inclusion of local nonprofit organizations and business leaders. The town hall had over 80 attendees who were able to listen to a panel discussion led by Crossroads Sexual Assault Response & Resource Center and the Gender & LGBTQIA Center. After the panel students were able to move to different tables to speak to members of the community.

Steiner does not help with the planning

of the town hall events but said the spring town hall may look similar to previous town halls that were mainly panel discussions.

Steiner said in the future SGA wants to continue being present and recognizable on campus. They have already implemented new initiatives for students to be aware of who represents them on campus such as Anya’s Top 5; a social media series where SGA executive president Anya Bratic spotlights five resources or events on campus. SGA has also started making recap videos for social media where a senator summarizes what happened during a business meeting.

Steiner said she hopes these videos will help gain more input from the student body and encourage students to get involved in SGA.

“Any momentum we’ve built this semester, that ends up getting the word out, and hopefully people are like, ‘Oh, I want to be involved in that,’ because we really get the opportunity to do a lot of awesome stuff with the school and with students,” Steiner said. “It would be great to be able to continue doing that, but we only can continue doing it with students involved.”

New Green Level town administrator plans for adventure tourism

Brandon Enoch develops Green Level Woodland Trail

Alex Nettles
Elon News Network

A long road led Brandon Enoch to become the town administrator of Green Level in Alamance County, a role assumed at the beginning of this year. He first worked in Green Level as the parks and recreation director. Now, he wants to bring the Green Level Woodland Trail, adventure tourism and a higher tax base to the town.

Enoch, who is Black, came to work for Green Level after a firing potentially related to “racial injustice” in 2022 from the town of Pickens, South Carolina, according to a GoFundMe page made to support his family after he lost his role. Enoch described the racially diverse Green Level as a “utopia.” According to 2020 Census data, 46.3% of Green Level’s residents are Black and 35.9% of residents are Hispanic.

“The residents, being that it is so diverse, never have any problems when the cultures collide,” Enoch said.

His goal now is to put the town on the map by attracting local businesses for the tax base.

Late last year, Green Level netted \$425,000 to use on public infrastructure from the State Capital and Infrastructure fund and Impact Alamance, a prosperity-focused nonprofit Alamance County. Green Level’s updated park and playground debuted in June of last year, but flooding concerns continue to hold up the proposed Green Level Woodland Trail.

“A trail will bring in the elements of adventure tourism with conservation,” Enoch said.

The funding for both of the grants came in a spurt of growth for Green Level. Much of the woodland ground shifted after Tropical Storm Chantal. For now, the trail is being built with caution. Enoch said the residents need an indoor gym to use in case of a power outage.

An engineer from the Department of Environmental Conservation found the trail faced a high possibility of erosion in December, according to the Town Hall Minutes. Since then, the efforts to build the trail have been more muted.

“We saw what happened with Chantal and we are making sure that we have the smallest



ALEX NETTLES | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Green Level’s Municipal Park received a \$75,000 grant from Impact Alamance to add a playground, which opened in June.

footprint possible before we build,” Enoch said.

The Green Level Woodland Trail was Enoch’s conception. He wrote grant proposals

for both projects last year when he started working with the town as the parks and recreation director. He authored the grant and followed through with the projects.

Tennis player hopes to provide platform for other athletes with Type 1 diabetes

Nikola Parichkov shares involvement with NIL organization for athletes with Type 1 diabetes

Benjamin Berfield
Elon News Network

Since sophomore tennis player Nikola Parichkov was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes in October 2022, he said his family has been extremely supportive and it extends onto the tennis court. He said everyone treats him normally which especially matters to him.

“My parents are more supportive than I could’ve asked for,” Parichkov said. “I’m fortunate on that end because I know some people that have not just diabetes, but any other kind of autoimmune disease and they don’t have the support they need to keep pushing forward and feel as though they’re still like a normal person.”

When Parichkov received the news, he said he was more surprised than concerned but could also tell the condition was starting to form.

“It was kind of a build up,” Parichkov said. “I wasn’t too frightened or worried by it. It was a bit of a shock.”

Parichkov said he knew he could count on his family for support. He said his grandfather also has Type 1 diabetes and saw how helpful everyone else was around him.

“I grew up around that situation already, and I knew in the back of my head that I’d have support from that side of the family,” Parichkov said.

Parichkov’s support doesn’t only come from his family. He is a member of Dexcom U, a Name, Image, and Likeness organization that exclusively focuses on college athletes living with diabetes. During matches, Parichkov uses a Dexcom Continuous Glucose Monitor G7 device which tracks his glucose levels during matches and he can check the levels from an app on his phone.

Parichkov said the device is very useful for conserving his energy during matches. He said that it was initially



Sophomore Nikola Parichkov fires a forehand in Elon’s 6-1 victory over University of North Carolina, Greensboro, on Feb. 8.

challenging when he first started playing after the diagnosis, but the Dexcom CGM has helped address that issue. While Parichkov said he puts this device on his left arm, he stated it can go anywhere that’s comfortable

“Sometimes my glucose levels would be really high, and I wouldn’t be able to eat anything so my energy would drop,” Parichkov said.

When Parichkov isn’t using Dexcom U’s technology to help his performance, he’s involved with their mentorship program. Parichkov said becoming a mentor gives him the platform to share his experience living with diabetes with other athletes who may feel more vulnerable. He said he hopes that stories such as his own can give them the confidence to continue competing in whatever sport they play.

“To the younger generation of athletes, I feel like it’s important to give them the understanding that there’s no disadvantage when you go out there just

as long as you believe deep down that you can still be the best out there, as long as you put the work in,” Parichkov said. “There’s plenty of support groups out there and we just have to create a better understanding of having Type 1 diabetes.”

Parichkov said his involvement with the organization was also inspired by professional tennis player Alexander Zverev. Parichkov said Zverev’s ability to overcome Type 1 diabetes and be ranked as the world’s fourth ranked tennis player made him realize he could still perform at a high level.

“I was having doubts when things were starting to kick off, but then I saw he was doing it at the highest level and I was like okay, this is not over,” Parichkov said. “That’s why I wanted to join Dexcom U.”

Parichkov said it’s been a great experience to meet other athletes who have similar conditions. He said many of them have lived with diabetes longer than he has, and it’s an opportunity to learn

about how they manage their symptoms.

“I got it toward my senior year of high school, but I know some of these people in this group have been dealing with it most of their lives,” Parichkov said. “Hearing some of their stories about how they have dealt with it is huge.”

By hearing people’s personal experience with diabetes, Parichkov said everyone collaborates very well with each other. He said they can come up with beneficial ways to help people with diabetes.

“THERE’S NO DISADVANTAGE WHEN YOU GO OUT THERE JUST AS LONG AS YOU BELIEVE DEEP DOWN THAT YOU CAN STILL BE THE BEST OUT THERE, AS LONG AS YOU PUT THE WORK IN.”

NIKOLA PARICHKOV
ELON SOPHOMORE TENNIS PLAYER

“Being a part of a group like this is perfect to come together and create ideas to reach out to the people that are still struggling,” Parichkov said.

Dexcom U isn’t the only new group Parichkov has gotten acclimated to. He is currently a month into his first season at Elon after transferring from Wake Forest University.

Head coach Maciek Skyut described Parichkov’s transition as “seamless” and added that his experience as a member of Wake Forest’s 2025 national championship team is valuable.

“I’ve enjoyed getting to know how he thinks and how he operates,” Skyut said. “We got a great group of people on the team and I think he’s integrated really well with the current roster.”



Sophomore Nikola Parichkov elevates to deliver a powerful first serve against University of North Carolina, Greensboro.

KATHAN GANDHI | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER